

Modesty Mistaken:

O R, A

LETTER

T O

Mr. Toland,

U P O N

His Declining to Appear

In the Ensuing

PARLIAMENT.

Proh Curia, inverstiq; Mores!

Hor.

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LETTER

TO

Mr. T. B. B.



UPON

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In the House

PARLIAMENT

Printed and Sold by J. B. B. at the
House of Commons

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LETTER to Mr. TOLAND,

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His Declining to appear in the ensuing

PARLIAMENT.

S I R,

AMONGST all the News of this Busie Season, no Report has affected me so peculiarly, as that of Your Inclination to fill a Seat in the Grand approaching Council; for I am persuaded, that not only our Civil Interest, but our Religion has some dependence on the Issue of the next Debates; and I have long known Your Talents, whether in Politicks or in Theology, to be so weighty, as to qualifie You at once for a Good *Old Committee-Man*, and for a Member of that *Healing Synod*, the *Assembly of Divines*. It was with this double justice to Your Merit that I lately confounded an Academical Fop; who speaking of Your Book-learn'd Antagonist, the late Bishop of *Worcester*, and gravely styling Him *A Body of Divinity*, was by me given to understand, that what the Bishop had in *Profundity*, Mr. Toland made out in *Latitude*; and that if the One was *Corpus Theologiae*, the Other was *Tractatus-theologico-politicus*: Which when to recover his Reputation, he

would have triflingly rendred, *Spinoza in the Abstract*, the height of my thoughts would not descend to make him any Answer*.

You may more easily imagine with your self, than I can express in words, the Publick Benefits we hop'd to reap from your Deliberations. These were to have chastis'd the Insolence of the *Irish* Senate, and of the *Scotch* Assembly: of the former, for setting fire to that *Phoenix* of Rational Religion which shall ever triumph in Destruction, and propagate from Ashes and Flame; of the latter, for the notorious Ill-treatment you thence receiv'd, by that *Mysterious* Act of Church-Power, *Excommunication*. These were to have fix'd the Balance of our Constitution, by giving the Parliament a proper Ascendant over the Prince, and the People over the Parliament. For though You have courageously offer'd at both these Attempts, while in a private Capacity; yet, as the Second would be a more *Self-denying Act*, should you obtain a Place in that *Deputed* Body; so the First would, at least, be a more decent Proposal in St. *Stephen's* Chapel, than in the Court of *Hanover*; where you shew'd such a superiority over the known *Italian* Wit, whom the Princes of his Time held in constant Pay, for not abusing them. As to his present Majesty's Person, I concluded; that, tho' You would not spare the Monarchy, yet You would deal gently with the Monarch, in regard to Your own Safety. This was the Advice which *Nestor*, as Wise a Counsellor as I, gave *Achilles*, as Great a Heroe as You.

Εἰ δὲ σὺ καλῆρός ἐσσι, θεὰ δὲ σε γένετο μήτηρ,

Ἄλλ' ὅτε φέρτερός ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πλεονέεσιν ἄνδρες.

Tho' Thou art Goddess-born, from Hot-bed of Erinnyst,
Yet He's the better Man who over Millions King is.

I wish'd indeed, you would proceed farther in Clemency, and resign your Office of *President* to the new *High Court* of

* Sir Ph. Sidney's Arcad.

† Erinnyes, as I remember, is a Goddess somewhat concern'd in Discords, Tumults and Wars; which is an improvement of Homer's Thought, who speaks only of a bare Goddess.



Justice against the Memory of His Majesty's Royal Grandfather. *Spencer's Rule*, as it might serve for an Universal Epitaph to Mankind, so it ought to be written in larger Characters on the Tombs of Princes:

*Vile is the Vengeance on the Ashes cold,
And Envy base to bark at sleeping Fame.*

As to the Common Cry of repressing the Insults of *France*, You and I have ever agreed with some others in judging, that this better becomes the Eagerness of an Addressing Multitude, than the Coolness and Caution of wiser Heads. The Grand Monarch is such a Torrent of Ambition, as may not without Danger be check'd or oppos'd:

*Stronger and fiercer by Restraint he roars,
And knows no Bounds, but makes his Power his Shores.*

I confess, to reduce the Exorbitancy of Princely Sway, would be no improper Design for one whose Politicks have restor'd the Propriety of Ancient Language, by making *King* and *Tyrant* once more equivalent Terms. But, besides that you had rather execute this Design at home; I conceiv'd, that if you could as artificially personate the *Magician* in the *English* Parliament, as you did some time since in the *French* Court, and raise such Clouds here as might disguise and conceal the Motions there, the *Rewards of Divination*, which you then miss'd of, would now court your Acceptance, with proportionable Increase. I thought I might be capable of doing you and our Friends some service in this Art of Delay, by a Piece which I have compos'd on the Subject. The Title of it is not, as might be expected, *Pedetentim*, or, *Festina lente*; but somewhat of a more Modern Air: *viz.*

Pian piano si va ben rato;

Or,

The Gallop of Snails

The true Pace to *Versailles*.

In these several respects I guess'd there was Occasion for Your Counsel and Management. But what made me particularly desire Your Aid to the Publick, was the Condition

on of *our* Affairs; which at present, bear a very ill aspect in this Fountain of Interests and Actions, the University: where, ever since Your precipitate removal, I have had the Honour to be *Resident* of our *Clan*. For,

As Quack in Symptomatic *Water*
 A reads Pale Patient what's the matter;
 When Complicate Distempers plot
 For Tempests in a Chamber-pot:
 So I, high perch'd in murmuring Ale-house,
 O'er *Muses Spring*, (as Bird of *Pallas*;)
 Do there the secret Seeds espy
 Of Monarchy and Hierarchy;
 And thence fore-bode what mortal Ail
 A-wait's our Embryo Common-weal.

Now, matters here stand thus. All seem to have found out our Policy in dividing them; and begin resolutely to join in their Common Defence. Few Disputes are heard about the old and new Ministry, Parliament or Convocation. Few Reflections are made on the Flattery of the superiour Clergy, or the Ambition of the Inferiour. No such Paradox is maintain'd as *High Church and Low Monarchy*; no Fear discover'd of betraying the Faith by serving its Defender. As to the prevailing Studies, the old Triple Alliance of Scripture, Philosophy and Humanity is revived against us; and it would grieve you to observe, how Persons of the brightest Imaginations, and who have Wit enough to recommend ours or any other Cause, so far submit their excellent Parts to the Bondage and Rigour of Belief, as if they intended to establish an *Act of Uniformity* in Thinking. Pulpit Eloquence improves daily, in Manly Sense, Judicious Method, and Charming Style: and what you'll say is worse, no Discourses are allow'd to be *Rational* that are not *Christian*. Miracles are evinced, Mysteries asserted, Sacraments enforced: so that, had I not a better Security than *Agrippa* who believ'd the *Scriptures*, 'tis possible I might sometimes be at least half a convert. Should this *Vem* run through the whole Kingdom, I foresee the

the Contempt of Separate-Teachers, the Ruine of Non-conformity, and the unavoidable Suppression of our Sect, which is now thought to have insinuated it self, as a Common *Substratum*, under all the rest. For Books; poor despised *Thomas a Kempis* will, in the new Version, purchase a dozen of that of *Philostratus*. *Blunt* and *Gildon* are read no more than *Pen* and *White-head*; and some pretend that all four learnt their Catechism together at *Cracow*. The *Turkish Spie* is discover'd, and severely handled for not believing so much as *Mahomet*. Reverend *Tho. Hobbes* is the very Drug of Auctions: *Millington*, when he Has borrow'd his Wit and Railery to get Him off, grows serious to find Him sticking upon his Hands. I am credibly inform'd that certain Indigent Zealots have burnt the chief of Your Treatises, to read the Answers of *Brown*, *Richardson*, and *Wagstaff*, by their Light: an Outrage so flaming, that I know not under what species of Injustice or Cruelty it ought to be plac'd. The same Ill Genius confidently assur'd me that *Pere Simon's* Critiques, are with an officious Modesty, shrinking into *Past-board*, against the Time that *Dr. Mill's* Testament shall be fit for *Binding*. I seldom find any professedly and directly entring the Lists against Your manifold Challenges: I hope, not so much out of Contempt, as because they take You for some such mighty Wild Beast, as may be sooner tame'd with following, than overthrown by withstanding†. Yet when your Writings come in the way of Discourse, the Company is wont to have as little Patience with You, as I have with Them. I confess, being unequally attack'd, I have sometimes quitted Your Design and Your Arguments as untenable. But then I always intrench'd my self advantageously in your *Language*; till the other Day a celebrated Captain drove me from this my last Retreat. For having transvers'd the two famous Lines of *Sir J. Denham* to the scandal of Bottled Ale, He would needs decant them again to the Reproach of your Style; which, He said was,

† *Sir Ph. Sidney's Arcad.*

Tho' thin not clear ; tho' sharp, yet very dull
 Rage without Strength ; o'reflowing yet not full.

It was upon an unhappy Day, when, solacing my self under this and other Disappointments, with the prospect of your destin'd Honour, and having prepar'd a Paper (much to this purpose,) of Informations, Instructions, *Gravamina*, &c. which should lye by me, till after the Holy-days, I might with an agreeable Complacency direct it for you at the *Lobby*; I walk'd to the Coffee-House, chiefly to maintain the Certainty of your Election. Where, at the first mention of your Name, a grave Confessor, lately return'd from His Travels, not only express'd his Wonder to find you so long lived, but with much Heat disputed your Right to farther *Existence*. *Vivitne*, (crie's my Pilgrim,) *Et vespitur Aurà--Ætherià?* *Vivit?* (replied I, with some suitable Passion,) *imò etiam Et in Senatum venit*. The Laugh was so loud, as to bring up the Maid with the *Postman*, * which as I negligently glanc'd over backwards, I was to my unspeakable Concern, stop'd by the following Lines.

" There having been a publick Report as if Mr. Toland
 " stood for *Blechinley* in *Surry*, 'tis thought fit to advertise
 " that Sir Robert Clayton has given his Interest in that Borough
 " to an Eminent Citizen; and that Mr. Toland has no
 " thoughts of standing there, or any where else.

Quem non incusavi, amens, hominumque deorumque?

How did my Folly, harden'd by Despair
 Make Earth and Heaven my vain Resentments share;
 Curse *Human* Powers, and cavil at *Divine*,
 And scorn the mean Excuse of Partial *Aretine*?

My Adversary made use of his good Fortune; and as if a new *Fulvia* had just now betray'd a new *Catiline*, would have requited my Sentence of *Tully*, by repeating to me the whole Oration. But I told him, I was not in Humour to fit out a Rehearsal; and retir'd to meditate on the Calamities of my Country.

* That from Nov. 18. to Nov. 20.

Many grievous Thoughts, like Convulsions in the *Interregnum* between Monarchy and Democracy, by a hasty Revolution dethroned one another in my Mind; many a racking Remembrance was sent to follow its flying Predecessors †. In fine, I knew not how to escape the Torture of one of these two Suspicions; either that Your Fears had constrain'd you to desert our Common Interest, when things call'd for so Publick a Relief as You seem'd to promise; or what is equally fatal and ominous, that You never had such an Intention, but that it was thought proper to accuse a worthy Member of designing Your Election in the Country, in order to the prejudicing of his own in the City. This is a *Dilemma* which fills me with double Horror; while I cannot determine either way, without pronouncing Sentence on our Cause, and on our selves. Nor can we expect, but that the late Conven'd Clergy, who tho' differing in the formality, yet I am satisfied, concurr'd heartily in the Substance of Censuring Your unparallell'd Performance, will take the advantage of this Accident, to effect that by the *Civil Inquisition* which could not be done so powerfully by the *Ecclesiastic*; first exposing You to the Envy, and then to the Cognisance of Parliament. And should the Prosecution here, emulating that in *Ireland*, be carried on with some Warmth and Spirit, the greater Kindgom might compleat that Overthrow, which the smaller (I confess, not without Bravery) begun.

You see the Occasion of my Epistle, and of my Apprehensions; to both which if You return a Satisfactory Reply, You will sensibly oblige me and all Good Men. In the mean while, in Conformity to our leading Maxim, *not to dye with Grief*, I am lightly gathering that Comfort from Poetry which *Cicero* and You are wont so laboriously to extract from Philosophy. The last Exercise I diverted my self with, was the Translation of Your Motto to *Amyntor*, which some of our Friends desire not the fatigue of construeing. I have ventur'd to make some Addition, in Verses taken from the same Place, and, I think truly, not less applicable to the same Purposes.

† Sir Ph. Sidney's *Arcad.*

*Dii quibus imperium est animarum umbraeque silentio
Et Chaos & Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late!
Sit mihi fas audita loqui; sit, numine vestro,
Pandere res altâ terrâ & caligine mersas.*

Ye Powers to whom thin shades do bow,
And speechless Ghosts, that walk below;
Chaos, of Anarchy the Sire,
And Phlegethon dread Lake of Fire;
Where Silence vast do's all embrace,
Silence, the Form and Soul of Space.
Amyntor, Knight of Fore-head Massy,
Thus joins himself to Your Ambassy.
Let him Infernal Tidings bear,
From Strygian Club; where once a-year,
Magick---Calve's Head, like that of Brass,
Or sing's Time is, or sigh's Time was:
Let him long-buried Truth set free
From Depths of Mist and Mystery.

*Corripit hic subitâ trepidus formidine ferrum
Æneas, strictamque aciem venientibus offert:
Et, ni docta comes, tenues sine corpore vitas
Admoneat, volitare cava sub imagine formâ,
Irruat, & frustra ferro diverberet umbras.*

Amyntor midst the Sable Nation,
Trembling, as doom'd by Convocation,
Auxiliary Metal drew
To fence his Front from Hostile Crew:
And, but his Guide the Learned Hag
Inform'd him, 'twas in vain to wag
Militant Steel at fleeting Train
Of Minds Æthereal, Safe from Pain;
Soon had our Heroe's stout Bravado
Ended in fighting, with a Shadow*.

In the next Edition of Your first Piece, (which You may
equip with the more jocose Title of the *Mystery-mauler*

* The Freedom and Plaisantry I use will be justified as well by our familiar
Acquaintance, as by the Genius of this sort of Verse.

or the Fallacy of Faith,) I beg the same Honour for Horace that You have here allow'd Virgil. The Motto I would recommend; is,

Credat Judeus Apella,

Non ego: namque Deos didici securum agere avum,

Nec si quid miri faciat Natura, Deos id

Tristes ex alto cæli demittere testis.

Let Profelytes of Circumcision

Find out by Faith the way to Vision;

Not I! for I, skill'd in Lucrece,

Know, what's Divine must live at Ease;

Nor think, if erst it so befel

That Nature did a Miracle†,

The mighty Chain-work wrought above,

Was fasten'd to the Throne of Jove,

In Heaven's high Towers, and let down thence

By Melancholic Providence.

As for Reading, in which You know me to be a Humourist no less than in Composing, having long since nauseated the Froth of Montaign and the Crudities of Charren, the Favourite Book with me at present is Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*: as indeed by the Flowers I have scatter'd in this Piece, You will discern what Garden I am now rifting. That this Renown'd Knight was by no means a Champion of our Cause, if it were not visible by his His Labour in translating his Name-like *Ph. de Mornay*, yet might fairly be suppos'd from the very *Arcadian* Conference (*Book 3.*) about Religion: the Managers of which are *Cecropia*, a Matron worthy to be the *Leontium* of *Epicurus*, and *Pamela* a Nymph whose tender Devotion might constitute Her Abbess-General of the *Recluse*. The Advantage is given so clearly to the *Niece*, in this Contention, that persons pedantically educated seldom read it, without crying *Sus Minervam*, in spight of *Cecropia's* Name, which turns the Jest upon themselves and their Fair Advocate. For my part, I think, thus to make the Young *Religieuse* wiser

† 'Twas no Miracle, say our Adversaries; but 'twas a Miracle, say I, if she did.

than Her Governess, is no less *mal à propos*, than in comparing Reason and Faith, to ascribe that superiority to the latter in Excellence, which the former no doubt has in Age. Would You know therefore, what prompted me to desire the acquaintance of an Author, who amongst the Levities of his Invention, seems still to adhere to Stiffness and Superstition in his Judgment? My Inducement was this: The Work is indisputably own'd for the Model and standard of it's Kind. Now I have been long pursuing a very useful Parable between Love in Romances, and Reason in our late *Natural Disquisitions*. They seem equally to soften the Rigour of Scholastical Notions; they inspire a Gaiety of Temper, and Liberty of Thought, and beget an invincible averation to the Tyrannic Rules, not only of Parents and Masters, but of Princes and Prelates. So that I am persuaded the former Pieces will give the same easie turn to a Gentleman's Practice, as the latter will to his Principles. To speak at once of these two Kinds of Writing in the Strain of both: they seem'd yok'd like Doves in the Chariot of *Venus*, drawing Her to the Oracle of Reason, there to receive the Homage of Her High-Priest *Lucretius*.

I shall conclude this Trouble, with two Wishes grounded on the chief Subject of it, in which I have a very large, and, I hope, very prevailing Concurrence. That if the Information thus publicly given were *false*, the Worthy Members, when assembled, will condemn the Malice and Forgery, as a high Reflexion on their Honourable Body: but, if *true*, that they will, for the sake of Peace and Piety, find some other way of bringing You to the House.

I am,

Decemb: 4th 1701.

with all due Respects,



Yours, &c.